BOOK REVIEWS

Empire of the Dharma: Korean and Japanese Buddhism, 1877–1912. By Hwansoo Ilmee Kim. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012. 412 pages. Hardcover: ISBN 9780674065758.

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Hwansoo Ilmee Kim's *Empire of the Dharma* stands as the first published study, in any language, of the intertwined fates of Japanese and Korean clerical communities in the era surrounding the Japanese Empire's annexation of the Korean kingdom in 1910. Whether published in Korean, Japanese, or English, virtually all previous research on this topic has focused lopsidedly on only one of the two sides. In its effort to treat sources and perspectives from both the Japanese and Korean sides, and its use not only of republished and digitized sources but also of literature produced within the various denominations of Japanese Buddhism, this study indicates promising paths for further research.

The content of the book falls into two sections, the first laying the ground for the second. Chapters 1 through 4 constitute the preparatory section for the main argument in the book. They summarize the very different histories of Buddhism on the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago. These chapters show how Japanese Buddhist clerics began to arrive in Korea and to meet with interested Korean monks almost as soon as Korea was forcibly "opened" to enhanced contact with Japan in the 1870s. They then focus on the outreach activities of (and rivalries among) Japanese monks from various groups (Okumura Enshin of the Ōtani-ha; Sano Zenrei of the Nichiren-shū; Hiroyasu Shinzui of the Jōdo-shū; and Ōtani Sonpō of the Honganji-ha). Finally, they narrate how, after Korea's reduction to a Japanese protectorate in 1906, Korean monks and temples rushed to affiliate with Japanese denominations in a desperate attempt to secure their safety, property, and livelihood.

The second part of this book—and its heart—lies in chapters 4 through 8. These track the most infamous case of Japanese Buddhist "spiritual conquest"

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in Korea: the (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt by Takeda Hanshi, a Japanese cleric with the Sōtō-shū form of Zen, to "ally" the Korean Buddhist institution with his denomination. These chapters show how Takeda arrived in Korea, at first not as a representative of his denomination, but rather as a "continental adventurer" embroiled in Korean political intrigue. They then trace his growing intimacy with a group of reformist Korean Buddhist monks and his retroactive appointment as an official missionary by his home denomination. Finally, these chapters show how he helped these monks organize themselves into a unified group, the Wŏnjong, which he attempted to align with his Sōtō-shū. While Korean-language historiography has typically stressed the resistance of other monks to this arrangement, *Empire of the Dharma* instead stresses the role of the new Japanese colonial administration of 1910. No longer in need of Japanese Buddhist groups to dominate Korean Buddhism, and frustrated by infighting among various Japanese groups, the colonial administration severed all formal affiliations between Korean Buddhists and their Japanese sponsors. It established its own legal instrument to order and control Korean Buddhist institutions, the Temple Law of 1911, and Japanese efforts to gain the allegiance of Korean monks ceased shortly thereafter.

As with any scholarship, there are inevitably some errors, including lapses in proofreading. In *Empire of the Dharma*, "Higashi Honganji" becomes "Hagashi Honganji" (p. 112); *guhō* 具報 ("detailed report") acquires an extra macron to become *gūhō* (p. 124, n. 15); and the title of the newspaper *Tae-Han maeil sinbo* 大韓每日新報 becomes, in un-italicized type, "Taehan maezl sznbo" (p. 265, n. 115). Spot-checking of citations also revealed some inaccuracies. Note 73 on p. 211 mistakenly directs readers to another work by Chŏng Kwangho; it should cite his *Ilbon ch'imnyak sigi ŭi Han-Il Pulgyo kwangyesa*. Note 92 on p. 134 should direct readers to a publication not from 1896, but from 1895; note 38 on p. 197 should direct readers not to p. 37 of Takeda Hanshi's *Gōkai kōgen*, but to p. 39. Transcription and translation throughout also evince some imprecision. The reference to the Korean town of "Kŭmsan" 金山 on p. 141 mistranscribes the primary source, which has "Kŭmjŏn" 金川. On p. 88, the Japanese adverb *midari ni* (written 猥リニ in the orthography of the original source) is mistranslated as "repulsively" when it should mean "recklessly" or "carelessly." *Yubal kŏsa* 有髮居士 signifies not a "monk with hair" (p. 124)—that would be *yubalsŭng* 有髮僧—but a "pious layman with hair." A sentence in literary Chinese (倭素尊釋氏王公已下皆抗禮), cited from the diary of a gentleman-scholar of the late Chosŏn

era, is mistranslated as: "From the start, the Japanese respected the Buddha and all kings, and officials observed proprieties" (p. 139).[1] As *sŏkssi* 釋氏 also denotes "the clan of the Śākyas," the monastic followers of the Buddha, this sentence would be better rendered as, "By their nature, the Japanese reverence Buddhist monks, and everyone treats them as equals, from kings and lords on down." And the paternalistic tenor of a 1911 decree by the Japanese Governor-General is muffled by the mistranslation of *kontoku setsuji* 懇篤説示 into the stern "seriously reminded" (p. 331); the more accurate "gently instructed" would help readers to sense its unctuous condescension. The matter-of-fact claim that Japanese lords of the Edo period petitioned the Korean court for copies of the Koryŏ Buddhist canon "throughout the Chosŏn period" (p. 207) is misleading at best; the last of those requests was declined in 1539, centuries before the Chosŏn dynasty ended in 1910.[2] In all these cases, more meticulous double-checking would have been desirable.

A problem of interpretation more serious for the book's argument is the treatment of the Japanese term *gyōtai* 凝滞. While *gyōtai* does have the general meaning of "to stagnate," as it is rendered on p. 317, the term does not necessarily carry a social Darwinian nuance; it also means "to be hampered by doubt and not to progress in one's practice," often in a Chan (K. Sŏn; Jp. Zen) context. This latter meaning is precisely the sense in which the term occurs in this book: an unspecified Korean monk is cited in a 1912 Japanese article as exulting that his (basically Sŏn) practice incorporates a variety of techniques, among which it "never languishes" (Jp. *gyōtai suru tokoro nashi* 凝滞する所なし), unlike the characteristically Japanese Buddhist attachment to a single practice. Indeed, from the late nineteenth century onward, intellectual Korean monks who encountered Japanese single-practice styles of Buddhism often seem to have dismissed them as disagreeably unbalanced. *Empire of the Dharma* itself acknowledges that even Korean monks who affiliated with Japanese Buddhist groups for protection and support had little interest in their hosts' theological niceties (pp. 314–15). On the basis of one short expression of this rather conventional antipathy, it is implausible to claim that "Korean Buddhists . . . turned the idea of modernity against their mentors by charging that the sectarian strife within Japanese Buddhism caused it to be stagnant while the harmonious blend of practices in Korean Buddhism signified that it was a progressive, modern religion" (p. 338).

[1] Hwang Hyŏn, *Maechŏn yarok*, trans. Yi Changhi (Seoul: T'aeyang Sŏjŏm, 1973), p. 300.
[2] *Kokushi daijiten*, s.v. "Kōrai-ban daizōkyō."

The articulation of that idea would require nearly two more decades, and it would come from the pen of a lay scholar, not a Buddhist monk.[3]

One of the book's other, larger arguments also proves less than wholly convincing. Claims to the contrary aside, the attempt in this study to nuance or complicate Takeda's activities does not invoke dramatic new evidence: readers do not learn that he was a closet socialist, that he was in the employ of the Japanese government, or that his writings were forgeries. As the author admits with admirable candor, the various chapters of this study really "argue for several broad points that have [already] been made by other scholars" elsewhere (pp. 14–15). Instead, the book piles up a succession of small amendments to previous scholarship, evidently in the hope that a string of minor course adjustments will eventually steer the ship of historical narration onto a new course heading. Thus, *Empire of the Dharma* painstakingly carves up into increments the path to the failed Sōtō-shū-Wŏnjong alliance, devoting most of chapters 5 through 7 to the brief period of 1908–1912. Readers learn that in 1908, Takeda was still "working with the Wŏnjong leadership" to "create a relatively independent Korean Buddhist administrative institution" (p. 203). They find out that the final treaty of alliance, which he helped to engineer, existed in multiple versions, one "more to the Wŏnjong's advantage" (p. 257) than the other (though that other version is extant in no source from the time of the treaty). Later they are told that Takeda operated as a lone wolf, whose plan elicited only the "strange and baffling response" (p. 270) of dismissal from his superiors within the Sōtō-shū in 1910; and that only in Takeda's final appeal, written as he lay on his deathbed in 1911, did he at last reveal that the alliance would not be equal: it would, as the very title of Takeda's treatise announces, set the Sōtō-shū on top and the Wŏnjong on the bottom (p. 286).

In the name of complexity, Kim's study also inserts a number of Korean actors into the narrative discussion, including prominent monastic leaders and an obscure monk who studied in Japan at Sōtō-shū University before returning to Korea in 1910 (p. 245). (*Pace* the book's mention of "Kom-

[3] Concerning this topic, in English, see Robert E. Buswell, Jr., "Imagining 'Korean Buddhism': The Invention of a National Religious Tradition," in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); "General Characteristics of Korean Buddhism: Is Korean Buddhism Syncretic?," in *Korean Buddhism: Tradition and Transformation*, ed. Shim Jae-ryong (Seoul: Jimoondang Publishing Company, 1999), pp. 171–82; and Eunsu Cho, "The Uses and Abuses of Wŏnhyo and the '*T'ong* Pulgyo' Narrative," *Journal of Korean Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004), pp. 33–59.

azawa University" for Sōtō-shū University, a name that dates only from 1925.) Takeda's Korean monastic collaborators may have shared his aspiration to secure official recognition for the institutions of Korean Buddhism and its resources, but they had no special allegiance to the Sōtō-shū. As for Takeda, readers learn that he "was complex," with "personal aspirations to fame and heroism," as well as "Pan-Asianist and Pan-Buddhist visions," and that he "positioned himself as either independent or sectarian depending on the audience" (ibid.). Readers are inveighed against the tendency "to categorize Takeda only as an imperialist," and urged to consider "his role as a Buddhist" (ibid.).

Does this pile of emendations amount to a wholesale re-evaluation of Takeda Hanshi? The answer to this question will largely depend on the reader. While *Empire of the Dharma* dispenses with the (principally) Korean-language historiography condemning Takeda Hanshi in a scant five pages (pp. 3–7), such literature continued to be produced for decades, and has yet to be definitively displaced. (By contrast, Japanese scholars have, to the present, largely avoided Takeda.[4]) For a reader persuaded, say, by Im Hyebong's two-volume exposé *Ch'in-Il Pulgyoron* (On Pro-Japanese [Korean] Buddhism, 1993), the portrayal of Takeda in *Empire of the Dharma* might register as novel or even shocking. But that is because Im and his colleagues put forward an opposition with little traction in Anglophone scholarship: a cartoonish, if dogged, division between filthy "pro-Japanese" traitors to the noble Korean race, and their heroic nationalist opponents—a division applied as much to Korean monks and lay Buddhists as to more obviously political actors. *Empire of the Dharma* thus stakes its worth on revisiting and undoing a binary that many of its readers will not even recognize, much less endorse.

What does this book tell students about the history of modern Japanese Buddhism more generally? It identifies the interaction between Japanese Buddhist missionaries and their Korean counterparts as "a symbiotic relationship" that "gradually transformed both Buddhisms" (p. 152). Alas, *Empire of the Dharma* substantiates this case only for the Korean side. It is, if anything, still a bit reticent in spelling out the extent of the non-propagation of Japanese Buddhism in Korea: it informs readers that the Ōtani-ha abandoned its effort to preach in the port town of Wŏnsan (p. 117),

[4] One exception, which has been translated into English, is Ishikawa Rikizan, "The Social Response of Buddhists to the Modernization of Japan: The Contrasting Lives of Two Sōtō Zen Monks," trans. Paul L. Swanson, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 25, no. 1/2 (1998), pp. 87–115.

but leaves out a likely cause, the violent death of teenage missionary-student Hasumoto Kenjō at the hands of a Korean crowd in March 1882. It tells readers that the first female Buddhist missionary to Korea, Okumura Ioko, founded a school for Koreans in Kwangju in 1898 (p. 111), but neglects to mention that she also brought approximately one hundred settlers from Japan with her, and more importantly, that Korean resistance (repeated rock-throwing incidents) forced the end of Okumura's colonial-educational experiment in less than a year. It informs readers that in 1906, Japanese missionaries helped their Korean counterparts establish "a central Buddhist school of Korean Buddhism" (p. 144), the Myŏngjin Hakkyo, but neglects to mention that the school graduated a scant eighteen students—just one-fifth of recorded enrollments—before it effectively ceased to function in 1910.

Kim's assertion that "Japanese Buddhists appropriated Christian propagation techniques" (p. 345) is perplexing; not only did Japanese Buddhist groups show little sustained interest in training their personnel to speak Korean, but they also produced hardly any literature for distribution in the Korean vernacular script. Despite a few isolated instances in which Koreans took on abbacies in Japanese temples, Koreans were afforded very little autonomy in the propagation of Japanese Buddhism to their compatriots. In these respects, Japanese Buddhists seem to have learned little from the Protestants. As one more piece of evidence that Japanese Buddhists were "inexperienced and unprepared in the market of foreign mission" (p. 346), the study cites their focus not on Korean laypeople, but on Korean monks. Ironically, this element of the Japanese missions actually resonates strongly with the case of American Protestant missionaries in early-nineteenth-century Lebanon. Denied access to the ruling Muslim majority of the population, they turned their attention to a minority population who seemed more natural allies: Maronite Christians. Like their Japanese counterparts, these Americans failed to convert the masses, but they nonetheless exerted a profound influence on the future of religion in the land of their missionary activity.[5]

Empire of the Dharma assesses the connections between two Buddhist communities in turn-of-the-century Korea as a failure for the Japanese but a bonanza for Korean monks, who for the first time in centuries obtained freedom of movement, the abolition of their degraded social status, and the recognition of the central government (now a Japanese government). But did Japanese Buddhist groups really fail in a task to which they committed them-

[5] Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

selves wholeheartedly? Except for the Ōtani-ha, no Japanese Buddhist group seriously attempted to engage Korean Buddhists for more than a few years at a stretch. The lack of interest in a Buddhist alliance from Takeda's superiors—one of whom complained in 1910 that it would be of "no benefit or convenience . . . whatsoever" (p. 273)—may be less anomalous than the argument in this book imagines them to be. In this regard, there is room for future positive reassessment of Japanese Buddhist groups' decision *not* to propagate to outsiders—a decision whose scope is not limited to members of other ethnic groups, but extends even to fellow Japanese of different persuasions.

The Philosophical and Theological Aspects of Interreligious Dialogue: A Catholic Perspective. By Jose Kuruvachira. Christian Heritage Rediscovered Series. New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2015. 177 pages. Hardcover: ISBN 9789351480822.

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Catholic writers on interreligious dialogue, or participants in live dialogues, usually write or speak against the background of a specific series of authoritative documents that were launched from the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) onwards and that spell out various Catholic overtures to non-Christian religions. It is apparent that there are certain patterns from which it is not easy to depart, for example a close connection with mission and propagation. At the same time the documents do reflect a gradual opening of paths to dialogue that have become available for Catholic theologians to follow without straining their personal relations with Vatican-led orthodoxy.

It is the great merit of the book under review that the key documents in this series, issued between 1964 and 1991, are carefully, helpfully, and critically introduced one after another. The author, Jose Kuruvachira, being Professor of Philosophy of Religion, History of Religions, and Interreligious Dialogue at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, is well placed to do this. While presenting the materials in a fully detailed yet accessible manner, Kuruvachira also packages his presentation with a certain amount of methodological reflection on the nature and practical options of dialogue. These "philosophical and theological aspects," as they are referred to in the title, provide an informative and stimulating context for the documents themselves.